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Editor's Preface

The twenty-fifth annual conference of the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) was held on March 16 to 20, 1994 at the St. Anthony Hotel in San Antonio, Texas, USA. Each year, the EDRA conference attracts scholars and practitioners from all aspects of environmental design practice and research. While each year's conference has a stated theme, these individuals present the results of their efforts and, as should be expected, many of the presentations relate to the theme and many, just as interesting, do not. This year was not an exception.

The Board of Directors of EDRA agreed that the theme of this year's conference would be "Banking on Design?" This theme reflects issues arising in the environmental design professions of critical significance. In effect, it asks, can the environmental design professions (architecture, interior design, urban design, as well as others) put forward design, art or style (and there is much confusion as to the proper use of these words) as their primary contribution to the society? While the importance of art, style or design is unquestioned, can these professions bank on design for the maintenance of their privileged place (e.g., their license) in the culture? Discussion, argument and research findings are growing stronger that they cannot. The notion is growing more potent that, in addition to design, they will be forced to demonstrate that they are knowledge-based professions. EDRA, of course, is one source of such a knowledge base. Many of the presentations relate to the theme. The papers transcribed from the plenary sessions directly focus on it.

All of the materials presented at the conference were selected by a peer review process. Those in Chapter 3, "Selected Papers," were chosen through a double-blind refereeing process. No conference of this magnitude can be accomplished alone. First, I must thank all those who attended the conference. I also must extend a truly heart-felt thanks to all who contributed directly to its development. I hope I have listed you all in the acknowledgments section. However, if anyone is omitted, please accept my apologies.

I believe you will find this volume a very useful contribution to your library and, I hope, to the strengthening of the environmental design professions as knowledge-based professions that do not have to bank only on design.

A.D.S.
January, 1995